foreign trade magazines, product development and quality upgradation through appropriate training programme etc.

(iii) Setting up of a national design centres at all India level for providing design input.

(iv) Implementation of DEPM Scheme at various centres to produce new exportable varieties from traditional items to create a niche market.

(v) The National Textile Policy 2000 has recently been announced to provide the policy direction for orderly and sustained development and growth of the textile industry in a harmonious way and to give a thrust to textile exports.

Agreement on textiles with foreign countries

†4386. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently signed an agreement on textiles with some foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what are its implications for the domestic textiles industry and what is its capacity to withstand against competition in imports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) to (c) Two separate Market Access Agreements (Called Indo-US and Indo-EU MoUs) were signed by India with US and EU in December 1994. Under these MoUs, India had agreed to give a phased tariff liberalisation schedule and market opening for certain textile items in return of certain benefits including enhanced quotas. Consultations were held during July-September 2000 to sort out a few problems in the implementation of these MoUs, in which Understandings were reached both with EU and US.

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

Pursuant to these Understandings, India has notified the revised combined tariff bindings to WTO. On the other hand, US has extended GSP concessionon 9 Indian handloom fabrics. The US and EU have also lifted their reservations of India's tariff binding notification. Besides, EU has also released 8000 tonnes of exceptional flexibilities and has also agreed to release 8000 tonnes of exceptional flexibilities during the remaining year till 2004, that is, till the end of textile quota regime.

The grant of GSP concession by US and release of exceptional flexibilities by EU would have a beneficial effects on exports to these markets. However, on domestic industry will have to improve its efficiency and productivity to meet the emerging global competition.

Spun silk mills in Karnataka

4387. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that all spun silk mills in Karnataka are facing difficulties because of non-availability of silk waste;

(b) whether Government propose to ban export of silk waste so as to help the local industry of the State; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) to (c) This Ministry have received representations from Spun Silk Mills stating that the availability of silk waste is coming down and that its exports should be curtailed/banned. On the other hand, silk reelers and exporters have also represented that exports of silk waste should not be curtailed or banned. A meeting of the reelers, exporters and Spun Silk Mills owners has been held at the highest level in the Ministry to hear the difficulties and view points of the both sides. It has been agreed at this meeting that there is a need to take a holistic view and to balance the interest of all sectors namely farmers and reelers, Spun Silk Mills and exporters. Government has been monitoring the situation carefully. In the current year action has been taken to reduce the customs duty on silk waste also from 35% to 15% to